

Recommendation #294

Development of Environmental Review Roadmap and Document Listing

Background

The environmental cleanup at SRS is a massive program estimated to cost in excess of \$60 Billion and is scheduled to last 40 years or longer. The cleanup program has been described as one of the most daunting cleanup efforts ever undertaken. The extent of the cleanup covers a wide spectrum ranging from remediation of such relatively simple matters as coal pile runoff areas to the very complex matters such as closure of waste tanks containing high level waste. The environmental documentation and review of these activities are equally complex.

The SRS staff has done a very good job of explaining the various requirements, review processes, and opportunities for public input. However, the process is still difficult to comprehend, stay informed and aware. During certain intense review periods there may be up to 10 or so topics that are being offered up for public comment. During some of the closure actions on the high level waste tanks there are numerous opportunities for public input on such topics as National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents, DOE Order documents, SC Pollution Control Act, etc.

Most of the NEPA documents and hearings are related to SRS-intensive programs such as the Draft Surplus Plutonium Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. However, this review process is exacerbated by many other documents that involve activities from other than SRS that we need to be mindful of. An example of this includes a review and input for Greater Than Class C Radioactive Waste that was offered up as possibly being disposed of at SRS. Another recent example is a NEPA review and hearing on Storage of Surplus Mercury at SRS and other sites.

Comments

With the complexity of the environmental review process it would be extremely useful for the public to have a roadmap of whereby upcoming environmental reviews, hearings, solicitation for input, etc. could be listed in a table and understood at a glance. Such a table could list the scope of the review, a synopsis of the effort involved, the dates for hearings and input, and the projected dates for NEPA program completion. Such a document should be issued on a periodic basis. It may be useful to issue such information on either a quarterly or a semi-annual basis. The periodic nature of the report can be determined after one or two reports have been developed.

Further, as an addendum to this table, it would be useful for the public to have a list of upcoming environmental reports that have wide interest such as annual environmental monitoring reports, Records of Decisions recently completed, etc.

The overall idea is to see the “big picture” on review topics, due dates, and what may be coming next which is of significant interest to public groups such as the CAB.

Recommendations:

The Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board recommends that DOE:

1. Develop a periodic report, with input from the CAB and the regulators as to the format, content and frequency that provides an overview of upcoming environmental reviews and provides relevant information on the particulars of each review process.
2. Develop a list of upcoming environmental reports and information soon to be issued that would be of interest to the public at large.
3. Assess if the information developed above could be used as a tool to inform the public at large.
4. Review the report on an annual basis, in conjunction with the CAB, and determine if any changes need to be made to maintain its usefulness.
5. We would ask that this would be easily accessible on the SRS website with minimal acronyms.